Spiritual Blessings

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

Jn. 12:29 The multitudes, therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, An angel hath spoken. ~~John~~ 28 Jesus said, "Father, glorify thy name."

INTRO. Text from last public discourse of Jesus as he face the great crisis of his life and saw immediately ahead him, Gethsemene and Calvary.

This not only a great crisis in the life of Jesu but the greatest hour in the spiritual historu of the w world ~~The very atmosphere was~~ when the soul of man was beingsearched. The very atmomphere had become tense because awesome ~~voices~~ forces were being felt and strange voices seem to fill the air, with a sort of thunderous roar. Each had his own interpretation.

To some, the great mass of the people- the solemn moment seems to have brot no revelation, no quickening of the spirit. God was breaking into life, but all they had to say about it was that there was a big noise, heavy thunder in the Judean hills.

Others, of greater degree of spiritual perception, regarded the noise as articulate speech of some kind and concluded that an angel had spoken.

But there was one whose understanding had reached a still higher stage of development, and He said, "Father," glorify thy name." However he may be tossed about on the sea of human passions, Jesus knew that the Father was steadily guiding all things to the highest purposeful end It was this understanding that enabled Christ to face his death with assurance, the assurznce that he was not throwing away his life.

And we find regarding events, crisal and otherwise, that there always have been these three degrees of spiritual understanding.

I. As in the days of our Lord the great mass of men are dull and unresponsive to the significance of events

Not that they do not know what is going on- they read the news, they know of the ~~Wo[illegible]r~~ ~~[illegible]~~ latest scandal or invention or accident.

They know of the ~~disarmament conference, et~~c.

BUT- it is all so much noise, it is but thunder to them. Eberything just happens in ajnatural way, nothing has any spiritual significance whatever. They attach no spiritual or social or moral significance to ~~current~~ events current or otherwise

2. You would think that all whh were with Jesus and who had witnessed his healings and heard his teachings and seen his goodness ~~that they~~ could not ha have failed to understand. But they did'nt.

The same spiritual dullness exhibited in the expe erience of Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus. To those who accompanied him the light seen was just a flare-up and the sounds they hears were just plain noise. But to Saul it revealed the figure of Jesus calling him to a new life, a life of real service. And what a complete change did Saul undergo. ~~His [illegible]~~ ~~[illegible] complete~~ And how, as a result, has Paul carved deep and lasting impressions of ever-growing influence upon the succeeding generations of mankind! The same event- to some just a mere noise of confusio but to Saul Jesus speaking the will of God for him.

And so it is'nt events that change the minds ar and lives of people. The Great World War h~~asn't~~ ushered in no ~~any~~ millenium. Constitutions and legal codes do not make people obedient and loyal: churches do not make them good; schools and universities do not make them educated and learned.

II. But some knew that the sounds heard was more than mere noise. It all meant something. They did'nt know just what, but they had some degree of spiritual percetion, enough to conclude that an angel had spoken.

Their souls were awake enough to see God at work in their drab lives. Things were not just happening. No naturalistic interpretation of events could satisfy them. But still their discernment was limited. They were still in the dark concerning the divine direction of their lives.

Going thru factory at Granite City.

III. But there was one present that day whose spirit was so alert, whose comprehension so fully developed that He missed nothing of the significance of that crisal hour. To him it was not noise, nor the voice of an angel, but His Father speaking to him.

The extent to which we are able to read the signs of the times depends upon how we have trained our spiritual powers and upon our attitude towards the soul-travail of thw world.

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth----in His temple everything saith, Glory."

Those who possess inside knowledge know that all things are working together for good" Yes, even even our Gethsemenes and Calvarys with all their pain and loss are adding glory to God.

Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

How do you hear and how do you interpret what you do hear?

Proximity to Jesus in the flesh did not guarkantee proximity to him in the spirit.

The surroundings of Xn civilization, the priveleges of democracy, religion and education mean nothing to you unless you have the ear that can hear, the mind that can understand, the heart that can respond

Paul tells us that he was not disobedient to the heavnmly vision that came to him. Had he been disobedient what would have happened?

Likely he soon would have concluded that his companion were right and he wrong regarding the blinding light and the sound.

But Paul was not dosobedient, and consequently the growing experience and the life into which his vision led him opened up for him depths of joy and hope and peace. Unsearchable riches came to him, and in all events he heard his Fatherys voice speaking to him.

Conc. The main point of the parable of the Sower is the application that Jesus himself made of it.
"Take ~~k~~ heed, therefore, how ye hear."

All events, even the common every-day occurrences, are the voice of God to the listening ear.

Good hearing implies a right state of mind and an adequate preparation, to understand and receive the truth. It requires sympathetic attention and concentration of thot upon the subject in hand-- difficult but necessary exercises of the mind.

Good hearing necessary to success in any field, especially in the spiritual realm. One's very life depends upon his hearing in this spiritual sense.

How are you going to face your coming days? How shall you take your Gethsemenes and Calvary's? Are you going to let them crush you with fear and doubt and bitterness?

Or are you going to see that it is God Himself ~~whm~~ who passes to you the mixed cup of life?

Are you going to rely for your strength and understanding on a crude materalism or a ghostly spiritualism? OR are you going to hear your Father's voice and realize that your times are in His hands. Can you go forward with Jesus and pray, "Father, glorify thy name?

~~"Life"~~

~~Our Lenten study of the Spirit of God in the Life of man should help us cultivate our powers of spiritual discernment.~~